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Watermarks in the Manuscript of Sir Thomas More and a Possible Collation

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the two comedies performed at the Middle Temple between Christmas 1597 and Candlemas 1598 being likely prospects. And the consideration of a stronger connection between *Twelfth Night* and the Temple might be encouraged in this regard (along with the sprinkling of legal jokes, Manningham's *Diary*, and references to the performing area¹⁴). What Guilpin is about in Satire Three we can at present only speculate. It may be that he telescoped the John Fabian incident and the current connotations of "Fabian" so as to make an attack on Davies less subject to reproof; even that he intended an attack on John Fabian alone; or that he capitalized on the coincident disgraces to attack both at once. Be that as it may, the discovery of a Fabian who in real life was a member of the party of misrule, who had ample cause to resent the authorities, and whose case may have aroused interest—while it does not, as it stands, resolve this particular enigma of *Twelfth Night*, much less abiding questions of its early disposition—should allow for a fresh start out of the present impasse.

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¹⁴ See G. P. V. Akrigg, "*Twelfth Night* at the Middle Temple," *SQ*, 9 (1958), 422-24.

WATERMARKS IN THE MANUSCRIPT OF *SIR THOMAS MORE* AND A POSSIBLE COLLATION

MICHAEL L. HAYS

The manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* is particularly interesting to those studying the practices of Elizabethan playwrights because of the many difficulties it presents and because folios 8 and 9 are thought to be in Shakespeare's hand. The condition of the manuscript is not the least of the difficulties and bears upon the possibility of collation and the questions of transmission and authorship.

In the only critical edition of the play (1911), W. W. Greg describes the condition of the manuscript in terms that do not promise much assistance with these matters. The 22 folio leaves which comprise the manuscript (Harley 7368) were long ago separated. The order of the leaves is irregular; a leaf containing part of scene 13 is improperly inserted among leaves for scene 4. Lacunae in the original text have been awkwardly filled by additions. Discoloration and brittleness at the margins have resulted in the loss of both paper and text; words and even whole lines have disappeared or been irremediably obscured, especially at the tops and bottoms of many leaves. Clumsy efforts at preserving the paper by means of overlays have at best slowed the processes of deterioration and have further obscured the writing on some leaves. In addition, says Greg, "the closeness of the writing, the absorbent nature of the paper, and in parts the heaviness of the mending, put any collation by watermarks, if such

exist, out of question." At present, mounted between plastic covers, the leaves are as well protected from further deterioration as they now can be.¹

Subsequent discoveries, however, have made promising the possibility of collation. In 1916, five years after Greg's edition, E. Maunde Thompson, whose *Shakespeare's Handwriting* was the first paleographic argument for Shakespeare's hand in the play, stated that the "few watermarks which are still visible . . . are varieties of the tankard mark." Thompson doubted that these watermarks would assist in dating the manuscript, and he was probably correct.² His announcement, however, suggested that the case was not so bleak as Greg had painted it. Then in 1919, Thompson announced that the "paper used by Mundy [the scribe of the original text] . . . bears as water-mark a rather narrow glove with outspread fingers." Thompson's concern with dating the manuscript apparently kept him from considering collation. What is puzzling is his immediately following remark: "The water-marks, if any, of the leaves of the additions of course do not concern us in the present inquiry. It may, however, be noted that the paper of the addition attributed to Shakespeare bears a tankard."³ Thompson himself, it seems, forgot his previously announced discovery of several "varieties" of tankard watermarks, and no one seems to have paid either of his announcements much attention during the controversy attending the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript in the following decade. Since no bibliographer that I know of seems to have considered the distribution of watermarks as a possibility for collating the manuscript, a reexamination of the manuscript seemed overdue. Following a visit to the British Museum, where the manuscript is housed, Professor William Ingram kindly made available to me his notes and some fine photographs, so that I might pursue this matter. At a later date, I hope to present a full account of the two kinds of and to develop more fully the implications of this and related information. For now I wish merely to make a brief, preliminary report and to suggest, by attempting one collation, the bearing such a study may have on questions about transmission and authorship of the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript.

The pertinent facts are these. First, all leaves of the original text in hand S (identified as Munday's) show either a glove or "hand" watermark or none at all. In addition, the chain-lines of these leaves are uniformly and comparatively widely spaced. Second, the additions to the original text in hands A, B, C, D (believed by many to be Shakespeare's), and E show either a tankard or "pot" watermark or none at all.⁴ There is some slight difference among these pot watermarks; whether they reflect different paper stock from different times is at present unanswerable. The chain-lines are comparatively narrowly spaced.

¹ W. W. Greg, ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Oxford: The Malone Society, 1911), p. v. Reprinted with corrections and a supplement by Harold Jenkins, 1961. Greg's description of the manuscript, to which I am indebted, may be found on pages v to vii. Professor William Ingram described the present method of preservation and display to me after examining the manuscript in the summer of 1971.

² E[dward] Maunde Thompson, *Shakespeare's Handwriting: A Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 62.

³ Edward Maunde Thompson, "The Autograph Manuscripts of Anthony Mundy," *Transactions of the Bibliographic Society*, XIV (October 1915 to March 1917), 329. Thompson's spelling of the dramatist's name is the less frequent variant.

⁴ The seventh hand, T's, is Edmund Tilney's. As Master of Revels, Tilney wrote several instructions directing revisions in the original text.

Moreover, at the outer edges of many but not all of the leaves with pot watermarks, the spaces between the chain-lines tend to diminish quite perceptibly. watermarks, their varieties, and their distribution throughout the manuscript, (To avoid awkwardness, I shall speak of chain-lines narrowly spaced as narrow chain-lines and shall speak of the diminished spaces between chain-lines at the outer edges of some leaves as a converging of chain-lines. I do not want to be understood as referring to either a dimension of or a distortion in the chain-lines themselves.) Thus, the paper used for the original text is clearly distinguishable from that used for the addition.

This information on watermarks and chain-lines already seems to answer or at least to clarify some questions bearing on the collation of the manuscript. The lacuna following folio 5 of the original text is filled by four leaves, folios 6, 7, 8, and 9. The obvious assumption is that these four leaves comprised two sheets of folios 6 and 7 and folios 8 and 9. Some support for this assumption is the occurrence of pot watermarks on folios 6 and 9, and none on 7 and 8, as we would expect of folded sheets. Moreover, all four leaves have narrow chain-lines. But there are some reasons for doubting this assumption. First, if folios 6 and 7 were conjugate, it is difficult to account for the distribution of writing by various hands. 6a is written in hand A and concerns a scene intended to come much later in the play. 6b is blank. 7a is written in two hands, B's and C's. And C wrote all of 7b. Conceivably, A wrote on folio 6, separated it from folio 7, and passed that blank folio to B or C.

Two considerations undermine this suggestion. (1) The other folios with pot watermarks, 9 and 12, are associated with unmarked folios, 8 and 11. All four of these folios have narrow chain-lines which converge at the outer edges. But folio 6, which does have a pot watermark and narrow chain-lines, lacks this converging of chain-lines at the outer edges. (2) And it is worth noting, though less conclusive, that since folios 8 and 9 were written by D and folios 11 and 12 were written by C (with a few lines added at the end of 12b by E), the obvious inference is that paired folios were written in the same hand or hands. It is unlikely, therefore, that folios 6 and 7 were once conjugate.

One can go somewhat farther. If folios 6 and 7 are separate halves of different sheets, the question arises whether one or the other or both of them might not be paired with another separate folio. The character of folio 16 suggests at least a tentative answer to the question. It is the only other unpaired folio of those which make up the various additions. It has a pot watermark and, most notably, narrow chain-lines which converge at the outer edges. In addition, 16a is written in hands C and B; 16b was written by B alone. In short, folio 16 shares two features with folio 7: (1) narrow chain-lines which converge at the outer edges and (2) the same hands. There is, then, a high probability that they once were conjugate. This collation makes possible a tentative account of the transmission of some additions to the manuscript.

One hypothesis for the transmission of folios 7, 8, 9, and 16 is this. C, who seems to have supervised much of the revision as well as contributed to it, directed B to make certain changes in the play. C began 16a with a stage direction. The folio was finished by B, who concluded his effort on 16b, tore the sheet in two, left folio 16 for insertion in its proper place, and began work as previously directed on 7a to continue where some now-missing writing after

folio 5 broke off or was marked for deletion. Near the bottom of 7a, B stopped work and turned the folio over to C, who finished 7a and filled 7b. At this point, D was called on to complete a scene indicated by a stage direction at the bottom of 7b and did so on folios 8 and 9. Subsequently, C made certain alterations in the speech headings and speeches written by D. The virtues of this hypothesis are three: (1) it offers an explanation accounting for the distribution of the different watermarks and chain-lines; (2) it also offers a tidy explanation of the distribution of different hands in several additions to the play; and (3) it acknowledges its status as hypothesis, not fact.

Whether this collation of some folios and my hypothesis regarding their transmission will clarify questions of authorship remains to be seen.⁵ Certainly, my hypothesis may be simplified by identifying hand C with hand D; they were originally thought to be the same. Until Greg's edition, the distinction between the two hands—and a disputed one in its application to particular passages—was made entirely on literary grounds. Greg was the first to offer a paleographic distinction between an unknown hand and, so Thompson subsequently argued, Shakespeare's. If any prejudice to distinguish parts written by C and D on literary grounds were corrected, Greg's very slight paleographic distinction might profitably be reexamined. On the basis of available paleographic data, Thompson's attribution of hand D to Shakespeare cannot be accepted with any confidence. It might be better for the study of this intriguing manuscript if the question of attribution of hand D to Shakespeare were reopened and not left merely ajar by recurring doubts about its validity. If Greg's sevenfold distinction of hands could be reduced to a sixfold one, some difficulties with the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* might be eliminated. Solutions to such difficulties are not likely to diminish the interest in or the importance of this manuscript so much as they are likely to increase our understanding of the practices of Elizabethan playwrights.

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⁵ Peter W. M. Blayney, "The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore Re-examined," *Studies in Philology*, 69 (1972), 167–91, offers another theory of transmission, which does not, however, consider the evidence of the watermarks.

PUBLIUS, MARK ANTHONY'S SISTER'S SON

JOHN W. VELZ
SARAH C. VELZ

ANTONY

These many, then, shall die; their names are pricked.

OCTAVIUS

Your brother too must die. Consent you, Lepidus?

